

# Kids these days

The publication for people who care about Alaska's Kids!

## Inside



CELEBRATING ALASKA'S  
ASSET BUILDERS

PAGE 2-3

IMPROVING THE ODDS

PAGE 4



SUBSISTENCE ART CONTEST

PAGE 5



UNITED STATES SENATE  
YOUTH PROGRAM

U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

PAGE 6



JUNE NELSON

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

PAGE 6

FORMER NFL PLAYER BUILDS  
PRIDE IN LOCAL KIDS

PAGE 7-8



A NEW WAY OF LEADING

PAGE 8



2008 SOY AWARD  
WINNERS NAMED

PAGE 9-10

## Celebrating Alaska's Asset Builders

By AASB Staff

*The Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE) is helping Alaskans create a personal web of support for every young person. Whether it's family, a clan, a tribe, a village, or a community, every child and teen needs connections with supportive adults.*

*The Alaskans profiled here are a few of the countless people across the state using assets to support our youth in leading healthier and more successful lives. We hope these stories will inspire others in Helping Kids Succeed - Alaskan Style.*



**Darcel Williams (left),** Unalaska

Born and raised in southeast Alaska in the rural community of Metlakatla, Darcel Williams was filled with family-, community- and youth-centric ideals from early on. She applies these ideals to her everyday life and in her current position as Community Engagement Advocate with the Unalaska City School District.

"It is important to get all generations interacting with one another because it creates a cohesive community. When we are aware of each other's emotions, thoughts, and concerns, it makes us all stronger.

Her greatest satisfaction comes from coordinating youth-led efforts and events in the district through Alaska Kids Are Our Kids (AKAOK), a group that encourages youth and adult engagement in their community. Before taking over as the lead of AKAOK, she volunteered with the

Continued on Page 2



**Ben Blasco,** Galena

Ben Blasco has a long history of working with youth in a variety of roles – teacher, wrestling and track and field coach, mentor, residence life advisor – and is now in his third year as Dean of Students at the Galena Interior Learning Academy.

"A personal goal that is shared throughout all of my experiences with youth is to always provide attentive care and to be mindful of individual student needs. Even though I have the same high expectations for all of my students, they have different home, personal, and academic experiences which makes each child unique."

In his current position with GILA, Ben says that even challenging situations like resolving behavior issues or dealing with a student's poor choices are teachable moments. "We all make mistakes. It's what we do after these missteps that help to define who we are."

Continued on Page 2

# ...Celebrating Alaska's Asset Builders

Continued from Page 1



## The Bridge Builder

*An old man, going a lone highway,  
Came, at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a chasm, vast, and deep, and wide,  
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.*

*The old man crossed in the twilight dim;  
The sullen stream had no fears for him;  
But he turned, when safe on the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.*

*"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim, near,  
"You are wasting strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day;  
You never again must pass this way;  
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide-  
Why build you a bridge at the eventide?"*

*The builder lifted his old gray head:  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he  
said, "There followeth after me today,  
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.*

*This chasm, that has been naught to me,  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him."*

## ...Darcel Williams

group frequently.

"AKAOK promotes activities that involve all generations and puts on tons of events each year."

Some of the creative events that bring Unalaska generations together include: Souper Mentor – youth invite adult mentors to lunch at their school, Indoor Drive-In Movies – youth and adults work together to build cars for the youth out of cardboard, then watch a movie in them, and Assets Golf – youth and adults learn about the assets while having fun miniature golfing together.

Darcel also emphasizes that little things that adults do can make a huge difference in the lives of youth.

"An important practice in working with youth is listening. It doesn't take much effort, and it's always worth it. It also doesn't take long to say hi to kids or to give them a ride when it's raining. Small things can have a large impact."

## ...Ben Blasco

He bases a lot of what he does, and how he thinks about responsibility in working with youth, on the poem "The Bridge Builder." The poem highlights the traits of compassion, consideration, and kindness and features an adult creating a pathway, or bridge, to ease the trials of the next generation. (see sidebar)

For Ben, success in his work all boils down to building positive relationships with his students.

He recently received in the mail a student's graduation photo along with a handwritten note that reinforced his feeling about relationships, and brought tears to his eyes. The note included: "Thanks for being such a good Dean and coach. I have learned so much about not giving up and giving it my all. Now I'll go and wrestle the real world."

Ben feels that "with great compassion, a big heart, and hands to serve, anyone and everyone can have a positive impact on the lives of youth."



## Lynn Bateman, Prince of Wales Island

With roles as a substitute teacher, classroom aide, school board member, community engagement and youth advocate, and board chair, Lynn Bateman has been involved with education in the Southeast

Island School District for over 30 years.

"There is always so much to be done to provide the best education possible for all our students," Lynn said. I wanted a bigger piece of the "doing pie." Community engagement is so very important for youth to achieve at high and consistent levels."

As the Community Engagement Advocate for the SISD, Lynn works with all eight of the district's Advisory School Councils. The councils serve as a direct communicative link between the community and the school board. Her goal is to

Continued on Page 3



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## ...Lynn Bateman

collaborate with community members, students, and school personnel to improve achievement for all students and to enhance communication between all stakeholders.

“Community voice is vital to student success,” Lynn said. “Bringing community members, youth, and adults together to make their school their own is a big part of building successful students and a healthy community.”

In addition to her CEA responsibilities, Lynn also writes weekly assets articles for the local newspaper, The Island News. The articles tie the 40 developmental assets to positive SISD strength-based student activities and accomplishments.

Having the view that gains in student achievement are reached through a shared responsibility that extends beyond the walls of the schools to incorporate families, faith communities, health organizations, and everyone in between, is an approach that Lynn believes will allow for sustained, increased student achievement to become a reality in SISD. And she’s dedicated to making that happen. “It enables me to think limitlessly and without boundaries concerning how to provide our youth with the very best socially, emotionally, and academically.”

# Celebrating Alaska’s Teen Asset Builders

Continued from Page 2

Below are just a few of Alaska’s teens who are giving back, building assets in their fellow youth, and making a difference in their communities. They were each nominated for Spirit of Youth recognition in 2007.

### Anna Torba – Delta Junction

SOY Nomination Category: Service to Community

Anna is very involved in her community. A sophomore at Delta High School, she is the student council representative for her class, a church youth administrator, an active participant in youth leadership forums and community mapping projects, and a member of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for Delta.

### David Nukwak – Dillingham

SOY Nomination Category: Service to Young Children

David, a student at Dillingham Middle/High School, leads “Homework Help Haven”, a program in which middle school students voluntarily tutor elementary school children. Besides helping with schoolwork, the group provides enrichment activities in reading, writing, and math. As mentors, they act as positive role models for the youth, while simultaneously building confidence and developing leadership skills for themselves.

### Bryce Timm – Ketchikan

SOY Nomination Category: Science and the Environment

Bryce is a political activist, leader and inspirational role model for youth interested in issues such as global warming, effects of plastics on the environment, and alternative energy sources.

He has been involved with the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) team since the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, serving on its Statewide Advisory Group the last two years. Through AYEA, Bryce has led peer-to-peer education trainings and presented at multiple conferences. He hopes to start a Ketchikan chapter of AYEA in the near future.

### Nunam Iqua Teen Resiliency Outreach (NITRO) – Nunam Iqua

SOY Nomination Categories: Cultural Pursuits and Service to Community

Nunam Iqua Teen Resiliency Outreach (NITRO) is a community service program made up of a group of teen volunteers who provide assistance to elders and others in need. Among other duties, the group cuts and hangs fish, shovels snow, and delivers wood throughout the community.

Spirit of Youth (SOY) is dedicated to creating, promoting, and recognizing positive youth involvement in communities across Alaska. Alaska ICE partners with SOY to highlight these students’ efforts and to expand SOY’s positive media campaign throughout the state.

From January – December 2007, 135 teens from 57 different locations across Alaska were nominated for a SOY award. There are 11 different categories a youth can be nominated for: Service to Community, Service to Children, Service to Peers, Overcoming Challenges, Lifesavers, Fine Arts, Media & Technology, Cultural Activities, Science & Environment, Government, and Faith-Based.

See page 9-10 for 2008 winners.





# Improving the Odds: The Power of Schools (and Parents) to Improve Outcomes for Teens

*Dr. Robert Blum was co-investigator on the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, the largest survey of American youth ever taken. His recent research has focused on the roles of schools and families in improving outcomes for teens. He spoke at AASB's 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on how positive school climate and connectedness improve student learning and reduce unhealthy risk behaviors.*

## 10 strategies that foster student connection to school:



Dr. Robert Blum Presenting at the 2007 AASB Annual Conference

### Parents

1. Model respectful, cooperative, positive behavior.
2. Participate in school events.
3. Show interest in your child's academic activities.
4. Stay in regular contact with your child's teacher.
5. Supervise, but don't do, your child's homework.
6. Be physically and emotionally available to your child.
7. Meet your child's friends and their parents.
8. Ask school leaders what you can do to support them.
9. Volunteer at school.
10. Nominate valuable school leaders for local awards.

### Teachers

1. Help students get to know each other's and your strengths.
2. Involve students in all aspects of classroom management.
3. Promote cooperation over competition.
4. Build a strong relationship with each student.
5. Give students attention and show excitement about learning through your actions.
6. Assign all student chores and responsibilities in the classroom.
7. Use instruction to integrate discipline and respect for classmates.
8. Give students more say in what they will learn.
9. Involve students in deciding how their work will be graded.
10. Use 'we', 'us' and 'let's' when presenting classroom activities.

### Administrators

1. Involve school and community in brainstorming simple changes to make school a more pleasant place.
2. Create policies that are based on student, and community strengths
3. Turn mistakes into learning opportunities.
4. Acknowledge and honor a wide variety of accomplishments.
5. Set high standards and challenge students to meet them.
6. Have high expectations for behavior
7. Encourage highly interactive teaching strategies.
8. Create a welcoming environment for all who come to the school.
9. Invite family and community members to participate in classrooms.
10. Create a common vision of success and keep it visible.

**"YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE CONNECTED TO SCHOOL NOT ONLY DO BETTER ACADEMICALLY BUT ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED WITH EVERY RISK BEHAVIOR STUDIED. STUDENTS WHO FEEL CONNECTED TO SCHOOL ARE:**

- LESS LIKELY TO USE SUBSTANCES (ALCOHOL, CIGARETTES, MARIJUANA);
- LESS LIKELY TO FEEL EMOTIONAL DISTRESS (INCLUDING SUICIDE);
- LESS LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENT OR DEVIANT BEHAVIOR; AND
- LESS LIKELY TO BECOME PREGNANT."

ROBERT BLUM, NOVEMBER 2007, AASB ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Adapted from Dr. Robert Blum's presentation, AASB Annual Conference, November 2007.*

*Dr. Blum is the William H. Gates Sr. Professor and Chair, Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.*

# Subsistence Student Art Contest Winners Named

Press Release from the US Fish and Wildlife Service



ANCHORAGE — The Federal Subsistence Board is pleased to announce the winners of the 2008 Subsistence Student Art Contest. The grand prize winners are Jack Weaver, 8, of Sitka and Denali Whiting, 15, of Kotzebue. Mr. Weaver's entry will serve as the cover art for the 2008-2009 subsistence fishing regulations book, while Miss Whiting's entry will serve as the cover art for the 2008-2010 subsistence wildlife harvest regulations book.

More than 350 students from throughout Alaska entered the contest, which is intended to encourage young people to share their subsistence way of life with others. The artwork was judged by the chairs of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils during the Federal Subsistence Board meeting Dec. 11-13 in Anchorage. The student art will be used in regulation books, brochures and other publications produced by the Office of Subsistence Management.

In addition to the two grand prize winners, 39 students will receive honorable mention certificates for their work.



**This entry, by Denali Whiting, 15, of Kotzebue, won this year's Subsistence Student Art contest. Whiting's entry is one of two grand prizes.**

They are:

## Grades K-2

Romy Bekeris, 5, Sitka  
Emily Young, 8, Sitka  
Kami Dodson, 7, Sitka

## Grades 3-5

Cadence Moffitt, 9, Cordova  
Kehli Shilts, 10, Wrangell  
Malachi Cole, 10, Wrangell  
Jared Allen, 9, Wrangell  
Keith Ivy, 9, Wrangell  
Darian Meissner, 11, Wrangell  
Minh Twamoto, 10, Sitka  
Mollie Bernhoft, 9, Sitka  
Denae Ulak, 8, Scammon Bay  
Joseph Kerwan, 9, Port Lions  
Randall Bartleson, 9, Port Lions  
Dana Natwick, 8, Port Alsworth  
Mercy Alsworth, 9, Port Alsworth  
Alison Zaukar, 10, Crooked Creek  
Teatona Ward, 10, Cantwell  
Camille Andrew, 8, Igiugig

## Grades 6-8

Veronica Kameroff, 11, Aniak  
Ria Santiago, 13, Unalaska  
Erika Luna, 13, Unalaska  
Hailee Jellison, 13, Unalaska  
Kevin Sorenson, 14, Unalaska  
Jonathan McKennett, 12, Port Alsworth  
Destiny Vlasoff, 11, Tatitlek  
Tracy Totemoff, 12, Tatitlek

## Grades 9-12

Larry Kasak, 17, Nuiqsut  
Timothy Sanner, 16, Pedro Bay  
Jared Nielsen, 16, Kotzebue  
Shay Sheldon, 14, Kotzebue  
Ned Lambert, 17, Kotzebue  
Chad Foster, 18, Kotzebue  
Shylena Monroe, 15, Kotzebue  
Kirk Howarth, 18, Kotzebue  
Darilyn Nelson, 14, Kotzebue  
Summer Jones, 15, Kotzebue  
Lena Downey, 17, Kotzebue  
Roz Nelson, 15, Kotzebue



**Third-grader Jack Weaver from Sitka is one of two grand prize winners of the 2008 Subsistence Student Art Contest**

**Congratulations and thanks to all of the students who entered the contest!**

# Two Alaskans named to U.S. Senate Youth Program

from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, [www.eed.ak.us](http://www.eed.ak.us)



U.S. Senators Ted Stevens and Lisa Murkowski announced the names of the two Alaska students who have been selected as delegates to the 46th Annual United States Senate Youth Program that will be held March 1-8, 2008, in Washington, D.C.

**Tonei Glavinic** of Anchorage and **Kyleen Luhrs** of Ketchikan were chosen from hundreds of applicants to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 46th Annual Washington Week.

The program was created in 1962 and has been sponsored by the Senate and fully funded by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation since inception.

Each year this extremely competitive merit-based program brings outstanding high school students to Washington, D.C., for

an intensive week-long study of the federal government and the people who lead it.

The goal is to help instill in students a more profound knowledge of the American political process and a lifelong commitment to public service. The foundation grants each of the student delegates a \$5,000 college scholarship. Transportation and all expenses for Washington Week are provided by the foundation.

Tonei Glavinic is Advisory Board Co-Chair at Steller Secondary School and a member of the Anchorage School District Student Advisory Board. He is also the President of the Board of Directors for the United Youth Courts of Alaska and a presiding judge in the Anchorage Youth Court.

Glavinic is a member of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network National

Student Leadership Team and National Advisory Council. He has received recognition from the Spirit of Youth Foundation and several President's Volunteer Service Awards for over 1,000 volunteer hours of service. Tonei plans to pursue a degree in political science and gender studies.

Kyleen Luhrs is Senior Class President at Ketchikan High School. As a sophomore Luhrs successfully brought a resolution to the state legislature to provide healthier options in the school vending machines. She has volunteered hundreds of hours to her community as a coach, tutor and mentor. She is a member of the debate team.

Chosen as alternates to the 2008 program were Andrew Baur, who attends Glennallen High School, and Heather Rand, who attends Whittier Community High School.

## June Nelson Memorial Scholarship

By AASB Staff



June Nelson, a long-time school board member from Kotzebue, contributed much to the cause of education through her long career as a school board member. June challenged us to be the best we could be. She filled our lives with laughter and fun times. Most important, we will remember June for her outstanding service on behalf of Alaska's children.

Each year the Association of Alaska School Boards Sponsors a Scholarship Competition in Honor of June Nelson. An auction of donated items is held each November to raise money for scholarships to be awarded to graduating high school seniors. Items for the auction are donated by school districts, board members, individuals and merchants from across Alaska.

Alaskan students filling out the applications must write an essay about assets and fill out a chart showing their involvement in community engagement, leadership, student activities and cultural events. A committee gathers each April to review the applications and awards a \$1000 scholarship to ten of the applicants. For more information about the scholarship or to make donations to the June Nelson Scholarship Fund, go to [www.aasb.org](http://www.aasb.org) or call Diana Miller at 586-1083.

**The Association of Alaska School Boards is proud to announce its 17th Annual Scholarship Award Competition.**

**This 2007-2008 school year, AASB will award ten graduating seniors each with a \$1,000 scholarship to apply toward their postsecondary education. The scholarship may be applied toward the student's choice of business, trade or college institution.**



# Former NFL Player Works to Build Pride in Local Kids

By Melissa Campbell, Alaska Journal of Commerce

You could call it Ma'o's Pride Parade.

Just after the final bell rang at Anchorage's East High School, Ma'o Tosi headed toward the business cove at the other end of the school. A horde of teenagers fell in behind him. Some rapped. Some danced. Most just talked and laughed.

"Ma'o! Hey man! Where we at today?"

"Yo, Ma'o! Where we meetin'?"

At 6-foot-6, Tosi is hard to miss in any crowd.

"Ma'o, I can't come today, I got Thursday school." That's after-school detention.

"Man, what's up with that?" Tosi said, then shakes his head. "I can't watch them every minute."

But he tries. After a year of volunteering in an after-school program for high-school teens, Tosi in April teamed up with the Communities in Schools of Alaska to develop Ma'o Tosi's Pride After School Program. He works to offer young people a safe, positive place to go.

It's at East High from 2 to 6 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. The rest of the week, the program is at Fairview Rec Center. Kids write and record their own music. They practice for a poetry slam or dance. They get help with homework, hear about scholarship opportunities or learn what jobs are out there.

About 40 showed up at East on a Thursday in late November. There would have been more but a half-dozen or so had to go to Thursday school. They had gotten too many detentions in a short time or skipped an in-school detention.

Tosi's program doesn't target the well-to-

do teens. He goes after the kids with nowhere to go. The ones who hang out in the streets, join gangs and get in trouble.

"No one is giving these kids an opportunity to do what they want," Tosi said. "My whole thing is we've got to get these kids together. We need to get these kids to show off their strengths, show their diverse talents."

He's after the kids who grew up like he did.

## Building Pride

When Tosi started his efforts, gang violence was big in the news. His main gig started at West High School, where Tosi worked as a security guard. He gathered up a group of Polynesian kids who wanted to do a dance performance at lunch. It was a hit.

Then a group of black kids asked him to work with them. Then came a group of Spanish kids. Then Asians.

"I told my wife, 'Hey, I've got something I really want to do.'" he said. "I asked her to give me until March to see if something happens."

By March, Tosi had raised \$90,000. By April, he had \$150,000. The municipality of Anchorage and the Communities in Schools were the big funders of the program - though the city's part is a one-time deal. The rest came from corporate and private donations.

"It grew. I got these kids in here, so why not have someone come in and share information on jobs and scholarships," he said. The program offers four \$1,000 scholarships now.



Mao' Tosi leads a group of East High School students in a War Dance during his Pride After School Program.

Photo: Melissa Campbell

He's got three staff members to help. He organizes the program as well as performances.

"That's the best part. They see things they never noticed in themselves," Tosi said. "They're performing, the crowd is cheering. They get teary-eyed. I got that through sports, that's what I'm trying to give them."

"I see more interaction going on, they're thinking more," he said. "We don't set limitations. They've got more confidence."

A dozen young women line up in the back rehearsing Polynesian cultural songs. A handful of Asian teens break dance in one corner, while a half-dozen black kids dance in another. Several more sit at the tables reading or doing homework.

Others are out in the hall practicing for an upcoming performance. A particularly loud group is working on their War Dance.

All performances start with the War Dance, which has its origins in the Polynesian Island of Maori. There's a lot of chanting, stomping and chest beating. It draws raves from the crowd.

Continued on Page 8

# A New Way of Leading: Building Family-School Partnerships for Student Success

By the Alaska Parent Teacher Association, [www.akpta.org](http://www.akpta.org)

**PTA**<sup>®</sup>  
everychild.onevoice.®



In the 2002 research review *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp conclude that there is a positive and convincing relationship between

family involvement and student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education.

To put it another way, when families are involved in their children's learning both at home and at school, their children do better in school. The report also points to specific types of involvement as being especially beneficial to children's academic success.

## **Finding 1: Involvement programs that link to learning improve student achievement.**

It's simple: The more parent and community involvement activities focus on improving student learning, the more student learning improves. Learning-focused involvement activities may include

- Family nights on math or literacy.
- Family-teacher conferences that involve students.
- Family workshops on planning for college.

## **Finding 2: Speaking up for children protects and promotes their success.**

Children whose parents are advocates for them at school are more confident at school and take on and achieve more. The more families advocate for their children and support their children's progress, the longer their children stay in school and the better their children do. Families should

- Become knowledgeable about the operations of schools and the laws that govern those operations.
- Be confident about their ability to work with schools.
- Expect only the best from their children and for their children.

## **Finding 3: All families can contribute to their children's success.**

Family involvement improves student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education. For involvement to happen, however, principals, teachers, and parents themselves must believe that all parents can contribute to their children's success in school.

## **Parents can promote their children's academic success by**

- Teaching their children the importance of education.
- Finding out what their children are expected to know and to be able to do and reinforcing lessons at home.

- Sending their children to school ready to learn every day.

## **Principals and teachers must support parent involvement by**

- Making parent involvement a priority.
- Recognizing and removing barriers to parent involvement.
- Sharing decision-making power with parents and community members.
- Working to understand class and cultural differences.

## **Finding 4: Community organizing gets results.**

Engaging community members, businesses, and organizations as partners in children's education can improve the learning community in many ways. For example, community partners may be able to

- Provide expanded learning opportunities.
- Build broad-based support for increased school funding.
- Provide quality after-school programs.

*Alaska PTA can be reached at 907-279-9345 for additional information/resources about the Standards for Parent Involvement.*

*The Alaska PTA was organized in 1957 and represents over 9000 members as a 501C3 chartered by NPTA.*

## **...Former NFL Player Works to Build Pride in Local Kids**

Continued from Page 7

"It gives males an opportunity to be masculine, be strong, like the gang philosophy," Tosi said. "They always remember the War Dance; the kids love it. It helps me recruit males of all races."

Tosi would like to expand to other schools, even get into middle schools. But he wants to do it using money without strings.

"I want to stand alone, without the city's and the state's money" Tosi said. "That gives me the opportunity to speak on any issue whenever I feel like it. I hear people

talk about helping these kids but I don't see that much support."

So he's trying to raise money through performances. He wants to bring up celebrities, with the caveat that his kids open the show. He's got calls out to Justin Timberlake and Alicia Keys.

Meantime, he's spreading himself as far as he can to help his kids. He's working with kids in the McLaughlin Youth Center, and is waiting on word to see if he can start working in Cook Inlet jail to train the adults to work with the kids.

First, he needs to figure out the transportation. How to get kids to the Fairview Rec Center and then home? The Howard Johnson hotel donates a shuttle three times a week to get kids from school to the rec center. Most don't have a ride home.

The plans are big, but what's the dream? "I'm not even sure," Tosi said. "I just want to help kids."

[http://alaskajournal.com/stories/120907/loc\\_20071209055.shtml](http://alaskajournal.com/stories/120907/loc_20071209055.shtml)



# SOY Recognizes Youth for Service



By Cher Easley

Spirit of Youth (SOY) began in 1997 as a media-based project to address a growing negative image of teenagers. Since then, hundreds of teens have been recognized by SOY for their positive contributions to their communities, and hundreds of positive stories about them have appeared in television, radio and the local newspapers. Anyone can nominate a hard-working, inspiring teenager or youth group for recognition in one of eleven award categories. Positive stories about nominees appear in 52 different Alaska publications and are broadcast on television reaching over 140,000 homes in the Anchorage area and over 40,000 homes in more than 230 rural communities through the ARCS satellite server. In addition, over 20 radio stations and their feeder stations air stories about the accomplishments of these young people.

Through its programs, SOY reinforces the Developmental Assets® all young people need to succeed in life (positive values and skills, adult and peer support, constructive use of time, and positive identity).

SOY is governed by a Board of Directors, 25% of whom are teens, and the Teen Action Council (SOYTAC), a group of students that provides leadership in all phases of the organization. They are

Winners from Unalaska to Anderson will be recognized and celebrated at the 10th annual awards banquet on March 29th at the Egan Center in Anchorage.

Listed below are the winners of 2008 Spirit of Youth Awards, their award categories, sponsors, and their home communities.

## Service to Community

**Togiak Unity Youth Council** members successfully campaigned to convince a majority of voters to continue the ban on importing alcohol to their village. [**Togiak**]

**Evan Rockwell** co-chaired the committee that created a police citizen youth academy which encourages youth civic responsibility. He researched grants, wrote the mission statement, and designed the logo. [**Palmer**]

## Federal Express -- Service to Children

**Katie Bauer** started "Ribbons of Life," a support group for children with a need to share their feelings while their parents are undergoing cancer treatments. [**Homer**]

**Melissa Haken & Kathleen Kingsely** learned of the need for shoes and clothing for children in Africa; then took the leadership role in creating, designing and implementing a fundraising plan to meet these needs. [**Eagle River**]

## Service to Peers

**Matt Cook** leads Raising Student Voice

and Participation (RSVP) training sessions to empower youth to educate adults and convince them that they really need to listen to what teens are saying about change and improvement in their community. [**Anchorage**]

**Cassandera Favors** took the initiative to bring Palmer Youth Court members to train Dillingham staff and students, and did all the preparatory work necessary to establish a youth court in their town. [**Dillingham/Palmer**]

## Anchorage Municipal Light & Power -- Science & Environment

**Shaun Nesheim** used his own money to start a scholarship program that awards teens for projects they develop which focus on finding alternative energy sources. [**Juneau**]

**Kerstin Cullen** worked with thousands of pages of wind speed data from Thompson Pass to determine the feasibility of this alternative energy source for the local area. [**Valdez**]

## Anchorage Firefighters, Local 1264 -- Lifesavers & Prevention

**Lucas Merli** is a Wilderness First Responder who directed rescue efforts and provided emergency medical care for his friend after a skiing accident in a remote area, which ultimately saved his life. [**Juneau**]

**Chelsea & Ashley Shoemaker** have dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours, serving as EMT's for the local fire department since they were 14 years old. [**Sand Point**]

## State Dept. of Behavioral Health -- Fine Arts

**George Yang** volunteers every week to work with elementary students to



help them develop their musical skills and doing all of this while caring for his younger siblings and keeping his household running. [Anchorage]

**Joshua Cotton** learned the art of carving fish hooks from an Alaska Native carver. After other students saw what he could accomplish, they were inspired to learn a new skill or craft for the Southeast Arts Fest. [Skagway]

### Association of Alaska School Boards, Alaska ICE -- Faith Based Service

**Celina Brown** created "Praise 3" with her two sisters, a gospel singing trio that voluntarily entertains patients, the elderly and others going through tough times. [Anchorage]

**Nichole Kruger** started a "come as you are" youth worship service and promotes a "Beyond Belief" event every week. She also serves as the church youth group's web master. [Anchorage]

### Alyeska Pipeline -- Overcoming Challenges

**Jessi Chapman** is the survivor of a tragic accident and experiences movement and speaking difficulties yet she has become a strong advocate and lobbyist for others dealing with mobility-related disabilities. [Ketchikan]

**Sheila Sine's** efforts are focused on helping her fellow students overcome their discomfort when they interact with members of the disabled community. [Glennallen]

### Government

**Rebels to Pebble** teens believe it is their responsibility to be educated about the area's proposed mining project which will affect their future. They are civically engaged in efforts to preserve their culture. [Dillingham]

**Anderson Students** surveyed residents and collected data which aided decision makers in creating a "free land" project that will positively impact the comprehensive plan for the borough now and in the future. [Anderson]

### CIRI -- Cultural Activities

**Nachle Alaska**, an East Indian youth dance group, provide entertainment and focus their efforts toward increasing the public's awareness about their unique and beautiful culture. [Anchorage]

**Disney Williams** serves as President for Voices of Indigenous People (VIP). She motivates her peers to become involved and stresses the importance of learning about and preserving their traditions and values. [Dutch Harbor]

### Chevron USA -- Media & Technology

**Kee Heywood & Alec Jurgeleit** created a powerful documentary about the challenges people face while in recovery. This film serves as a testament to the traditions and values of Tlingits. [Haines]

**Chris Van Wyhe**, along with the help of other students, produced a 90 minute film about the history of the Kennecott mines and surrounding areas. [Kennecott]



## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Spirit of Youth Awards Banquet

EGAN CENTER - ANCHORAGE

**SATURDAY MARCH 29, 2008**

Doors open at 5:00 with silent auction and entertainment

Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$35 for youth

To reserve seats, call (907) 566-7676

For more information, visit [www.spiritofyouth.org](http://www.spiritofyouth.org)

## Congratulations to all Spirit of Youth award nominees and award winners!

*For more information on Spirit of Youth, the SOY Awards, or to get a complete list of the 2008 Award nominees, visit: [www.spiritofyouth.org](http://www.spiritofyouth.org) or call Cher Easley at (907) 566-7676.*